

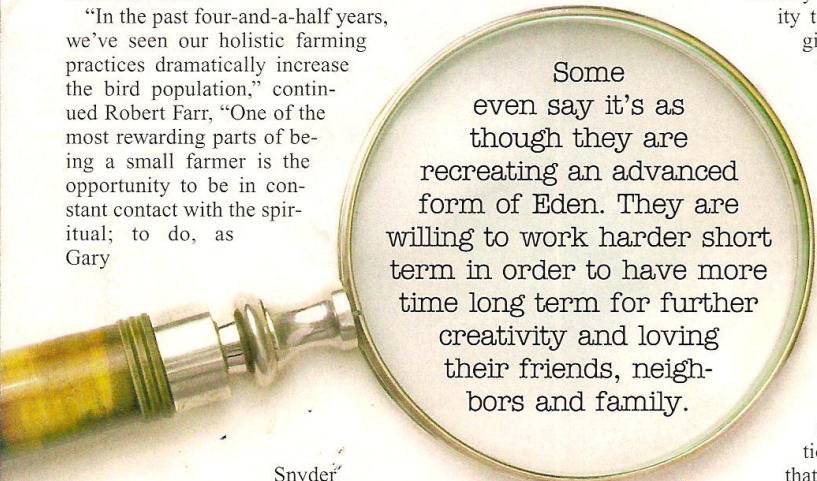
family income, spare-time income, or even full-time income for part-time work."

A lady took a (mini-farming) course," Ken said, "returned to Alaska, prepared her land and grossed \$20,000 the first year, and then had a six-month winter vacation!"

Micro eco-farms team up nicely with other cottage industries. Personal chefs can create one-of-a-kind cuisine from their own minifarms. Massage therapists can create their own line of garden-fresh, body-care products. Bed and breakfast inns are very popular when combined with small working farms, each enhancing the customer draw and promotion of the other.

Regardless of their differences, they have one thing in common. They seem to have an inner knowing that creating with the earth is attached to Something Greater than anything purely human-created, and they must continue to work with this greatness. As they do this, their presence on the earth is collectively creating a very beautiful world.

"In the past four-and-a-half years, we've seen our holistic farming practices dramatically increase the bird population," continued Robert Farr, "One of the most rewarding parts of being a small farmer is the opportunity to be in constant contact with the spiritual; to do, as Gary



Some even say it's as though they are recreating an advanced form of Eden. They are willing to work harder short term in order to have more time long term for further creativity and loving their friends, neighbors and family.

Snyder best said, 'the real work.' I need only stroll out my kitchen door to be immersed in the holiness of nature, to see the mountains, endlessly walking. All of our own sacred nature begins outside, in the worship, as the Amish say, of God's creation."

It often doesn't feel so much like a business separate from leisure and hobby time, and it gets less and less important to distinguish "work" from "play."

"It's a relationship," said Diana Pepper of her 2.75-acre Green Frog Farm in northwest Washington State. Diana reminds me of a "human faerie" and is a living library of earth wisdom. While she and her partner, John Robinson, occasionally wild craft their acreage's native woodlands and meadows, most of their production is on only one-third of this acreage.

Diana and John have established a Pacific Northwest native plant nursery, selling native trees, shrubs and groundcovers, plus herbs and ornamental flowers. They also create small bottles of herbal and flower healing products, kits for massage therapists, offer workshops and private consultation sessions. Both agree they are not separate from their livelihood: "It's 110 percent of who we are," said John.

At this point, micro eco-farms fill in spaces that larger sized farms don't attend to. They use back yards, vacant lots, or their families' own small acreages. As they grow in number, it is anyone's guess as to what type of new economical foundation they could create.

We are currently still dependent on a system that produces a few staple crops on huge acreages that ship these crops across the country and world. Jo Robinson, author and educator, states it well, "We need micro eco-farms, mini eco-farms and maxi eco-farms."

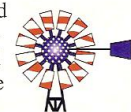
The current problem with food production is not that there isn't enough food, but more that it isn't produced where it's consumed fresh off the vine by the region's own local citizens who are in tune with that Something Greater, making the local growing decisions, choosing the locally-needed adaptations, and keeping the food and revenue close at hand.

When a stable local economy is created this way, distant shipping to and from far away lands becomes a friendly trade rather than dependency. The ability to produce locally is one of the many gifts of the micro eco-farm. And with world travel and technology that allows networking among eco-farmers of all sizes, their successes are mounting at an accelerated rate.

It is my honor to present in the following chapters a close-up of those who are actually succeeding, a treasury of what you can grow, what farming methods you can use, what animals you might like to choose from, and how the farmers reach their markets. I will present an emerging new foundational how-to on growing methods that span all forms of sustainable small farming, no matter what is grown or where the location. Then I will distill many methods that have increased production on small ground from double to up to 40 times that of conventional growing. You can choose which ones you want to explore and incorporate. Mix and match, and see if you can make two plus two equal 10, something you will see demonstrated in Chapter 6. Once you see all that is available to you, as with every farmer I interviewed, you may find that what's inside you is the greatest success secret of all.

"I love to create. I'm strong-willed and muse-driven," said Baruch Bashan, of the above described Gaia Growers Farm. "I got into software, like one does writing or painting. And, as with those other artist-types, having some other person decide what you create ain't quite the same thing as when your Muse calls. So, this allows me to define what is to be created."

It's as though these new micro eco-farmers sense something on the horizon that is beautiful, and they are taking us there. Chapter One of: Micro Eco-Farming: Prospering from Backyard to Small Acreage in Partnership with the Earth.



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